

## RAILWAYS TO FIGHT 8 HOUR DEMAND WITH A GREAT PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

Continued from First Page.

sent to the railroads this spring. They are the highest paid men in the rank and file of the railroad service, many of them earning more than their division officers.

According to this statement the wages of the men on the trains vary all the way from \$100 a year, paid to green brakemen, to the \$2,500 to \$4,000 a year piled up by the "aristocrats of the rail," the engineers on the best paid "super runs." Thousands of the engineers, it is stated, earn upward of \$2,000 a year, and monthly pay checks of \$200 to \$250 are common on roads whose stockholders have forgotten what a dividend check looks like. Many of the engineers, the railroads assert, are paid more than bank presidents in the smaller communities through which they run.

Explaining the manner in which wages are now paid, the railroads point out that the present schedules provide that the men shall be paid by the mile or the hour, whichever gives them the larger earnings. The prevailing basic day for wage fixing being a hundred mile run or ten hours on duty. If a train is delayed and the crew makes only fifty miles in ten hours the pay is for ten hours, the equivalent in time of the hundred miles. If 100 miles are made in the ten hours the pay is on the mileage basis, the equivalent of the ten hours. All extra time or extra miles is paid pro rata.

The effect of the demand for an eight hour basic day would be to increase the freight speed basis from ten to twelve and a half hours, or 25 per cent. With the proposed overtime rate fixed at time and a half, the higher rate, there would be an increase in the overtime rate now paid of 37½ per cent.

The railroads point out that where an engineer, for example, is now paid \$5 for a hundred miles run in ten hours, or at the rate of 50 cents an hour, the proposed schedule would allow him \$5 for the first eight hours, or 62½ cents an hour. For the next two hours he could charge at the rate of 93½ cents an hour, or \$1.87 for the overtime, making \$6.87 for the same service now costing the railroads \$5. This would be an increase of 37½ per cent.

### Passenger Men Excepted.

"While the demand," says the railroads' statement, "will be made by the 400,000 members of the four train brotherhoods, the higher rates would be received only by the men in the freight and yard service. More than a million and a half other employees of the railroads would get no benefit, and the carriers, if compelled to add these many millions of dollars to their payrolls, would have to find the money in one of four ways—reduce the wages of the million and a half men outside the train service, reduce payments for interest and dividends to their security holders, curtail the betterment expenditures for new stations, reduction of grade crossings and other non-productive improvements demanded by the public, or ask the government to allow a proportionate increase in freight rates. The owners of the railroads—the stockholders—now number more than 600,000, and their share of the gross earnings is less than 2 per cent, as compared with 45 per cent. paid the employees. For every dollar paid the stockholders \$22 is paid the employees."

Explaining why the men in the passenger service had been excepted from the proposed demand, railroad managers pointed out that since the so-called Clark-Morrissey award on the New York Central in 1907 the passenger men had virtually had an eight hour day. The award was made as a settlement of demands made of the New York Central when it was the custom for the employees to proceed against individual roads. It was a preliminary to the standardization idea, inasmuch as following that settlement they compelled the other roads in a similar way to bring up their rates to those fixed for the New York Central in cases where they happened to be lower.

In the through passenger service the men are paid on a mileage basis of 100 miles. Some of the conductors are able to make more than 200 miles in a five hour run and thus have virtually a five or six hour day at the most, earning on this mileage basis \$50 a week and more.

### Suburban Service.

In what is known in railroad parlance as "turn around" service, such as suburban trains, the men are supposed to work eight hours in twelve. If they work continuously more than eight hours of the twelve they get overtime. If they are on duty, though not continuously on a train, for more than twelve hours they get overtime over the twelve hours.

These passenger men feel fairly well off. It is the men in the freight service who are the grumblers and who are behind the present movement. On all large railroads, with the single exception of the New Haven, these men preponderate. According to one of the best railroad managers in the country, an eight hour day in the freight service of the railroads is an economic impossibility. The principal reason for this is the difference in speed between the freight train and the passenger and the fact that it does not run on schedule like the passenger train. Consequently freight runs cannot be arranged to bring men within a time limit. Their runs are arranged between division points, which are the determining factors, and these must be located in large towns where there are the proper terminal facilities.

Something like an eight hour day might be brought about possibly, railroad operators say, if the distances between division points were very much shortened. At least, if the new rule should go through, this would help in keeping down the enormous amount of overtime, but to relocate the division points on the Eastern roads in accordance with any such system would entail an expense upon the railroads too enormous to contemplate. Because of the price of land no Eastern railroad has changed its division points in years, the cost being prohibitive. "It would be better to pay this overtime until we went into bankruptcy and had to shut up shop," remarked one railroad operating man when this solution was put up to him.

### An Example Cited.

As to the effect of the proposed eight hour and time and a half rule on freight runs, here for instance is an example taken from the New Haven: One of the fixed runs on this road is from Maybrook to New Haven, a distance of 11 miles, about the average long freight run on a railroad. A train makes this run usually under normal conditions in from eleven to twelve hours. It costs the New Haven for the engineer and fireman to make this run on the present basis, \$11.60. Under the new rule this would be increased to \$14.40, an increase of 24 per cent. If this run were to be cut the expense to the road would be double. In the freight service on this road overtime now runs from 10 to 25 per cent. of the payrolls, depending upon the amount of business. Just now it is up to the latter figure.

Some of the labor leaders have insisted that the aim in the eight hour day movement is to obtain more time at home for the men. They explain that the proposed jump in the overtime rate is intended to penalize the railroads, for making men work longer hours, so heavily that they will be forced to rearrange their runs and let the men off earlier. But on this point there does not seem to be an agreement. In fact, the experience at terminal points is that it is the overtime men that the men

## WHAT RAILROAD MANAGERS SAY OF PROPOSED 8 HOUR DEMAND

That it would add millions to their payrolls.

That because of wage increases between 1910 and 1914 a total of \$250,000,000 was added to their payrolls for the same number of men.

That because of wage increases awarded to the four classes involved in the present demand—engineers, firemen, conductors and trainmen—their earnings have jumped in four years \$70,000,000.

That the proposed schedule would be in effect an increase of 25 per cent. in the freight speed basis for wage computing.

That it would mean an increase of 87½ per cent. in the overtime rate.

That many engineers are now paid more than bank presidents in small communities.

That more than 1,500,000 other employees would get no benefit.

That the 600,000 stockholders of the railroads now get less than 2 per cent. of the gross earnings.

That the employees, on the other hand, now get 45 per cent. of the gross earnings.

That the employees involved in this demand, although numbering only 19 per cent. of the railroad army, now absorb 28 per cent. of the railroads' gigantic payroll of \$1,500,000,000 a year.

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are most anxious to bid for, showing that what they want is the extra money. That some of them have even been opposing the proposed rule for the reason that it might do away with overtime.

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There are three million ragged, barefoot outcasts facing a worse death than drowning—enduring the slow torture, the horrible agony of famine and exposure.

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The job is up to America. No other country can do the work.

It's a privilege to share in your country's superb enterprise.

It's an honor to contribute to such a cause.

Don't start talking war—don't confuse the issue by arguing sympathy with this nation or that.

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